



For Immediate Release
November 13, 2007
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Basrah Province people receive three newly constructed Primary Healthcare Centers

By A. Al Bahrani
Gulf Region South District



Al-Mishraq Primary Healthcare Center, one of the three PHCs that were recently turned over to Iraqi Ministry of Health will offer more than a standard health clinic and should help reduce the overall infant mortal rate in southern Iraq. (USACE photo by A. Al Bahrani)

BASRAH, Iraq—The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has completed and turned over three newly constructed Primary Healthcare Centers to the Basrah Health Directorate. The PHC projects managed by the USACE Gulf Region South district aim to provide essential medical care to people

in undeveloped areas in Basrah Province and represent another step toward the transition to the future of Iraq's health care system.

Two of the PHCs are of the Type A design for Primary Healthcare Centers and

the third is a Type B. "The A-level clinics have the ability to treat routine medical problems that all communities face," said Chief of Engineering and Construction Thomas Eidson of the Adder Area Office. "The B-level clinics exceed the A-level clinic's abilities and provide an even greater level of care by having more sophisticated equipment and the ability to treat diseases that are less common."

He said USACE awarded the contracts to Iraqi local companies in July 2006 and the construction of the three projects was completed in September 2007.

"The projects have been designed to make health care service more accessible to the people of Iraq and provide essential care to people in undeveloped urban and rural areas," he said. "The three two-story structures are equipped with modern medical and office equipment, furnishings and consumables. The facilities provide for medical/dental examination and treatment with space dedicated for X-ray, vaccinations, laboratory, pharmacy and public education," Eidson said.

Andrew Schmieder, Basrah Area Office resident engineer, said "[USACE] provided a modern and effective fire-alarm system, photo light system, telecommunications room, intercom system and water treatment system for all three PHCs.

"The cost for each healthcare center is over \$600,000," he said. Each PHC is estimated to serve between 10,000 to 12,000 patients each year.

Schmieder said the contractor has been conducting operations and maintenance training for the facilities and the equipment installed in the scope of the projects. "Training on the systems was arranged by the contractor and included appropriate technicians from the city of Basrah," he said.

Schmieder said that despite the challenges of building the facilities, USACE is

helping provide people with something "... very good; they [otherwise] don't get this level of comprehensive medical care..." He said the availability of nearby medical attention should have an overall impact on reducing infant mortality.

He explained that while there are four additional clinics under construction in the region, there are far more people in outlying areas that will still need to travel fairly long distances to reach medical care. However, with the addition of these clinics, it should greatly reduce those distances and make medical care more readily available to the general population.



The PHCs project designed and built by the U.S Army Corps of Engineers in Basrah Province in southern Iraq play an important initial step for community healthcare, they will save Iraqi lives, provide health-care services at the neighborhood level and employ more Iraqis in the healthcare profession. (USACE photo by A. Al Bahrani)

According to engineer Al, an Iraqi deputy resident engineer at Basrah Area Office, while these are not the first projects of this magnitude in Basrah, the newly constructed PHCs will offer more than a standard health clinic and should reduce the overall infant mortality rate in the southern area of Iraq. "The people of Basrah Province will have found it much easier to access quality health care at local PHCs and they will be able to see their living conditions improve over the present," he said. "The construction of these

three completed projects plays an important initial step for community healthcare. They will save Iraqi lives, provide healthcare services at the neighborhood level and employ more for the healthcare profession."

Iraq-wide the USACE effort to construct 142 PHCs is 95 percent complete with 69 turned over to the Ministry of Health and 33 open to the public. An additional 15 are complete and scheduled for turn over. There are 48 still under construction, three are in work stoppage for security reasons, two are re-programmed, four are deprogrammed, and one was bombed.

The Gulf Region South district is responsible for managing Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund (IRRF) projects to support reconstruction in the nine southern provinces of Iraq Karbala, Babylon, Wasit, Maysan, An Najaf, Al Qadisayah, Dhi Qar, Al Muthana, and Al Basrah, an area covering more than 65,000 square miles.



The three newly constructed PHCs in Basrah are equipped with modern medical and office equipment, furnishings and consumables. (USACE photo by A. Al Bahrani)

Note: A. Al Bahrani is a Public Affairs Specialist with the Gulf Region South district, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Iraq. For more information, contact John Conner, public affairs officer at (540) 542-1528 or email requests to CEGRD.PAO@tac01.usace.army.mil. For more information on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Iraq, visit www.grd.usace.army.mil.